

Water is LIFE



More than 7,000 years ago, the people of India knew the importance of water harvesting. Do you think we can adopt such methods to conserve this precious resource.

Water is essential for our survival. It is important to remember that water is not a permanent resource available through the year. However, it can be recycled. Today, overhead or underground tanks store water in our homes in cities. However in ancient India, many traditional practices existed to harvest or collect water from rain, streams and rivers.

A water harvesting system is one that collects and stores water for later use, especially in summer when water is scarce. India's use of traditional water harvesting systems dates back 7,000 years.

Storehouses

Wetlands are areas where water controls or regulates the environment, and any animal or plant life. They occur where the water table is at or near the surface of the land, or where land is covered by water.

Wetlands are cradles of biological diversity and are among the world's most productive environments. They

provide water upon which countless species of plants and animals depend for survival. Wetlands support high concentrations of birds, mammals, reptiles, amphibians, fish and invertebrate species. They are also important storehouses of plant genetic material. Rice, for example, which is a common wetland plant, is the staple diet for more than half of humanity.

There are six kinds of wetlands:

Marine or coastal wetlands which include coastal lagoons, rocky shores, and coral reefs

Estuarine wetlands including deltas, tidal marshes and mangrove swamps

Lacustrine wetlands associated with lakes

Riverine wetlands along rivers and streams

Palustrine wetlands, essentially marshes, swamps and bogs

Man-made wetlands like fish, shrimp and farm ponds, irrigated agricultural land, salt pans, reservoirs, gravel pits and canals.

Source: : www.ramsar.org

National Wetland Conservation Programme Guidelines for Conservation and Management of Wetlands in India

Here are some traditional water harvesting structures and systems in use in different parts of India:

Kere: These are large tanks with boundaries built from mud, earth, stones and cement around a stream. A kere has a provision for overflow of excess water, and outlets for irrigation and feeding channels. Water from a kere is used for drinking, irrigation, livestock and groundwater recharge. Keres are used in Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu.

PHAD:

This system has earthen embankments built on a river that divert water for agricultural use. They are used in Dhule and Nashik districts, Maharashtra.

Kund: A large saucer-shaped deep pit covered by a dome. The size of a kund can range from a few meters to 100 square kilometres in diameter. It has a gradual slope which allows water to flow into the deep pit. This pit is lined with limestone and ash which naturally

purify the collected water of dust, dirt and silt. Kunds are used to store drinking water in dry climates like Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh.

Naula: A stone-lined tank which catches dripping water from springs and streams. Naulas are surrounded by shady trees to prevent evaporation of water. This water is used for drinking in the hilly areas of Kumaon, Garhwal and Uttarakhand regions.

Zing: Channels are built to divert glacial water into a storage tank called a zing. This water is mainly used for irrigation in mountain regions like Ladakh and Leh in Jammu and Kashmir.

Bamboo drip system: A network of bamboo pipes of varying diameter, length and positioning is used to harvest water from hill springs or streams. Bamboo drip systems are used for irrigation of black pepper and betel leaf crops, and are also sometimes used for drinking. This system is widely used in the tribal pockets of the Khasi and Jaintia hills of Cherrapunji, and in the Mawsynram belt of Meghalaya.

Surangas: These are vertical man-made excavations in hill slopes that act as a tunnel network, where water from the top to the bottom of the hill is captured in the porous soil. This water is then channelled into large tanks, collecting enough water for agriculture and livelihood. Surangas are used in the Dakshin Kannada region of Karnataka and in Kerala.

Source: Traditional water harvesting systems, Centre for Environment Education, Bangalore.

Schools Water Portal - An initiative of Arghyam

**For more resources and knowledge on water, visit the Schools Water Portal online:
www.schools.indiawaterportal.org/**

Poly houses boost farming in Kashmir

SRINAGAR, March 25, 2014 - Farmers in Kashmir have gone hi-tech, using precision farming methods to boost the production of vegetables, and poly houses to facilitate early sapling production leading to a surge in the sale of vegetables.

The high-tech poly house is made out of a polycarbonate double layer transparent sheet, and installed with digital water showers, digital heaters and digital clocks, along with a special green coloured net to protect the sapling or crops from excess heat or cold. Farmers appreciated this initiative of the agriculture department as poly houses produce saplings before their expected time to hit the markets.

The authorities said the initiative had been launched as an experiment and had yielded positive results.

“Poly houses have brought about a revolution here. We now have vegetables in large quantities in off season as well. We only raise seedlings in the department of nursery here, we have provided 9000 poly green houses to people. They can easily grow vegetables during off season.

“In the winter months of January, February, they have fresh vegetables, which was not possible earlier,” said Director of Agriculture Department, Kashmir Peer Zada Mushtaq. At present, the saplings of onion, lettuce, garlic, cauliflower, cabbage and potato are selling like hot cakes at the Lal Mandi agriculture campus where the hi-tech poly houses have been installed by the department.

Farmers and residents thronged the campus to buy the saplings for their kitchen gardens and large acres of land used for commercial purpose. — ANI

Accept our 10-point charter to earn our support: farmers' body

The Tamizhaga Eri and Aatrupaasana Vivasayigal Sangam – Tamil Nadu has decided to support those parties in the polls that promise to implement its 10-point charter of demands.

Resolution adopted

A resolution to this effect was unanimously adopted at the forum's State general body meeting held here on Sunday presided over by State president P.Viswanathan.

One of the resolutions urged the government to fix Rs.4, 000 per tonne for sugarcane, Rs.2, 000 per quintal for paddy, Rs.7, 000 per quintal for cotton, and Rs.1,800 per quintal for maize. It wanted the Central government to bring out a separate budget for agriculture and announce Rs.3, 000 as pension for farmers who are above 60 years of age.

Allow export

It also urged the Centre to allow the export of cotton, maize, and onion. The State government should take steps to link 42, 213 lakes and rivers in the State to prevent rainwater from draining into sea. Linking of rivers and lakes would turn rain-fed lands into fertile ones which would usher in a second agricultural revolution, the forum said.

Check dams

Dredging of tanks in Tiruchi, Perambalur, Ariyalur, Pudukottai and Karur districts, implementation of Chinnamutlu check dam at Malayalapatti in Perambalur, construction of a causeway-cum-check dam from Lalgudi to Kilikoodu near Kallanai in Tiruchi, construction of a check dams at Manamedu area near Thottiyam in Tiruchi district and across the Marudhaiyar in Ariyalur district.

Establishment of a procurement centre for onion at Thuraiyur and waiver of farm loans to assuage the sufferings of farmers hit by monsoon failure, formed part of their other demand.

'State government should take steps to link 42,213 lakes and rivers'

Weather forecast goes local for farmers



THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, March 25, 2014 - With the Indian Meteorological Department (IMD) beginning to release weather forecast that is specific to the level of a block within a district, farmers here would be able to plan more accurately for the harvest season.

Various aspects of informed planning and early prediction of crop yield, integral in a country where agriculture is predominant, were discussed during a users' conference on services rendered by the Meteorological Centre, Thiruvananthapuram for departments relying on IMD data in Kerala and the Lakshadweep Islands.

Even slight changes in weather patterns could profoundly impact yield and there by the economy of the State and the country. For instance, heavy monsoon rain in one season has the potential to leach the soil of all its nutrients. Anticipating this, intensive vegetable development programmes that involve feeding the ground with micronutrients have been implemented by the Agriculture Department in the State. Moreover, contingency funds and weather-based insurance measures to protect farmers indicate progress in the field of linking weather and agriculture.

The larger picture

S. Manoj, an agriculture officer, pointed out that looking at the larger picture was essential in this regard. During his presentation, he also sought more personnel to be trained in climate change adaptation and mitigation. The Director of Meteorological Centre, Thiruvananthapuram K. Santhosh, said that an even more area-focused approach was difficult but implementing block-level analysis shortly was bound to help.

K. Ajith, representing the Agricultural Meteorological Field Unit at Vellayani, spoke of how several fungal diseases in certain crops were anticipated in advance because weather information signified days of high humidity ahead. SMS alerts are sent in Malayalam to farmers in addition to forecasts being displayed on notice boards of 100 panchayats in the State. Rain gauges were also distributed to many, Mr. Ajith said, adding farmers need 'reaction time' to prepare irrigation measures or other props that would help mitigate adverse weather conditions.

Chief Secretary E.K. Bharat Bhushan inaugurated the session which was attended by senior officials of the Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre, the Airports Authority of India, Fisheries, Ports, Revenue and Disaster Management and Irrigation Departments.

The conference held to mark World Meteorological Day highlighted the relevance of weather forecasts in various spheres. The theme this year is 'Engaging Youth'.

Most rural population engaged in non-farm work: NCAER survey

As part of India Human Development Survey, the team covered 42,000 households across the country

NEW DELHI, March 25, 2014 - Employment in agriculture has fallen sharply over the last seven years and a combination of farm-oriented and non-farm work is now the most common form of rural employment, according to the findings of a nationwide representative sample survey conducted by the National Council for Applied Economic Research (NCAER). *The Hindu* is reporting exclusively from the findings of the NCAER's 2011-12 round of the India Human Development Survey.

The NCAER team covered 42,000 households across the country, 83 per cent of which were surveyed for the last round of the IHDS in 2004-05. The IHDS is the largest independent household sample survey in the country.

The IHDS's findings on employment show that the fall in agricultural employment — documented in the 2011 Census as well — is much larger than what was previously believed. In 2004-05, half of all rural men and 83 per cent of rural women worked only on farms, making it the most common type of rural employment. However, exclusive farm-oriented work is still the most prevalent form of employment among rural women, engaging 66 per cent. The IHDS findings contradict the latest data of the government's National Sample Survey Organisation (NSSO), which shows purely farm-based work as the biggest employer in the country.

"It is a fact that the NSSO has not been able to adequately capture the combinations of different types of economic activities that people engage in," said Preet Rustagi, a labour economist, professor and joint director at the New Delhi-based Institute for Human Development (IHD).

According to the IHDS findings, non-farm work is now a bigger employer for rural men in Punjab, Haryana, Assam, north-eastern States, Kerala and Tamil Nadu. The same is true for rural women as well in the two southern States.

The IHDS confirms an alarming trend — the NSSO found so too — of a fall in the participation of women in the workforce — from 47 per cent women aged 15-59 in 2004-05 to 43.7 per cent in 2011-12. The participation rate, which considers all those employed or looking for work, for men is 78.9 per cent and 77.2 per cent in 2004-05 and 2011-12 respectively.

While the fall in male participation is primarily explained by rising higher education enrolment, the work participation rate for women have fallen even for those in their 20s and 30s.

The IHDS also confirms that wages have grown exponentially over the last decade. The daily agricultural labour wage has nearly tripled for men in the last seven years, while the non-agricultural wage has more than doubled. The wages of women workers, though still much less than male workers, have grown similarly.

(Part 2 of a five-part series)

📄 ***NSSO data, which contradicts NCAER findings, ignores combinations of economic activity: economist***

📄 ***IHDS confirms alarming trend of decline in women participation in workforce***

Conference on agri-risk management today

MYSORE, March 25, 2014 - Books on finance and derivatives to be released

The Department of Studies in Commerce, University of Mysore, will organise a conference on 'Agri-risk management' under the Special Assistance Programme of the University Grants Commission here on Tuesday.

Vice-Chancellor K.S. Rangappa will inaugurate the conference on the department premises at 10 a.m. He will also release four books authored by conference coordinator G. Kotreshwar.

M.J. Bhende of Institute for Social and Economic Change, Bangalore, will deliver the keynote address and K. Eresi, retired professor of Bangalore University, will be the guest of honour.

Invited speakers will conduct three technical sessions after the inaugural ceremony.

Padmavathi of Indian School of Business, Hyderabad, will speak on 'Agriculture production risks: Need for Disaster Risk Management'; D. Dilip Dange, Deputy General Manager, Agriculture Insurance Company Limited, Bangalore, on 'Performance of Agri-Risk Insurance' and M.R. Shollapur, director, Siddaganga Institute of Technology, Tumkur, will speak on 'Financial literacy'.

The books which will be released at the conference are in the field of finance and derivatives — A Dictionary of Managerial Finance; Capital Budgeting; Capital Market Instruments: Stocks, Bonds and Derivatives; and Finance Derivatives.

Sapling planting drive

COIMBATORE, March 25, 2014 - A well conserved and protected forest ensures uninterrupted supply of basic life support needs such as oxygen and water, Aruna Basu Sarcar, Additional Principal Chief Conservator of Forests and Director of Tamil Nadu Forest Academy (TNFA), said here recently.

She was addressing the members of TNFA and kick-started a sapling planting drive to mark the World Forestry Day and International Day of Forests drive on the TNFA campus in the city.

She said that in 1971, the Food and Agriculture Organisation of United Nations declared that March 21 would be celebrated as World Forestry Day. Further, the General Assembly of the United Nations in its 67th session first established the International Day of Forests in 2012 and decided to celebrate it on March 21 every year. She added that every individual was directly and indirectly benefited from forest resources.

‘Thanjavur no longer ‘Granary of South India’

Thanjavur district is slowly losing its name as the Granary of South India, said Vijayakant, leader, Desiya Murpokku Dravida Kazhagam (DMDK), here on Monday. Campaigning for BJP, alliance partner of the party here, Mr. Vijayakant said that Thanjavur which once had the sobriquet: *Chola Naadu Sorudaithu* (land that had food) and cultivated three crops a year is now has to be content with one crop a year due to Cauvery water issue. That one crop too is being raised using pumpsets and even for that there is no proper power supply. This is the present situation of Thanjavur district for which the rulers of Tamil Nadu and the Centre should be blamed. The proposed methane extraction project is now threatening the district. Environment is also under huge risk.

Water level

The water level in the Mettur dam stood at 48.88 feet on Monday against its full level of 120 feet. The inflow was 1,461 cusecs and the discharge, 1,044 cusecs.

The water level in Papanasam dam on Monday stood at 49.65 feet (permissible level is 143 feet). The dam had an inflow of 28.13 cusecs and 204.75 cusecs of water was discharged from the dam. The level of Manimuthar dam stood at 72.59 feet (118 feet). The dam had an inflow of 26 cusecs and 100 cusecs of water was discharged.

Kanyakumari - The level in Pechipparai dam stood at 8.65 feet, 37.05 feet in Perunchani, 3.02 feet in Chittar I, 3.11 feet in Chittar II, 2.80 feet in Poigai and 42.08 feet in Mambazathuraiyaru.

Wet cocoa prices take a bullish turn

Sells at Rs. 65 per kg for the first time in years



The prices of cocoa have rocketed after heavy rains in the last two harvest seasons affected the crop.— FILE PHOTO

MANGALORE, March 25, 2014 - The price of wet cocoa beans here has touched an unprecedented high of Rs. 65 a kg — perhaps for the first time in recent years — as the first cocoa harvest season has begun.

The high price recorded last for the wet beans here was in May, 2011 where it fetched Rs. 48 per kg. Meanwhile the price had touched Rs. 52 per kg in Kerala in June 2010.

Cocoa, cultivated as an inter-crop in areca nut and coconut plantations, is

mainly used in the manufacture of chocolates. Cocoa beans are the primary raw material for confectioneries, beverages and other edible products.

According to Anantharamakrishna P., a prominent cocoa grower having about 3,000 cocoa plants at Peruvai near Vitla, the price is now at an all time high.

He said that many farmers lost the crop in the first harvest season (April-August) last year due to heavy rains and pods rotted. As rains continued till mid-October, flowering was delayed resulting in shortage of crop of the second season (October-December) also. This could be the reason for price going up.

Mr. Anantharamakrishna said that this time he noticed that wilting of young cocoa pods was abnormally high in the plants in his plantation.

Kudur Ramachandra, an industrialist-cum- major cocoa grower near Kadaba, attributed the hike to short supply due to heavy rains in the last two harvest seasons, which ended about three months ago.

Mr. Ramachandra said that he usually harvested 10,000 kg of wet beans annually. Due to unseasonal rains in March he could harvest only about 25 per cent of the normal production.

M. Suresh Bhandary, Managing Director, Central Arecanut and Cocoa Marketing and Processing Cooperative Ltd. (CAMPCO), a principal purchaser of cocoa from farmers, said that the cooperative procured the wet beans at Rs. 60 a kg till Friday.

Mr. Bhandary said that the wet beans fetched Rs. 40 a kg two months ago. The hike in price was due to short supply

He said that when compared to the last season the prices of dry cocoa beans have gone up by Rs. 20 a kg in this season. Now its price stood between Rs. 195 and Rs. 205 a kg. The annual requirement of dry beans of CAMPCO for its chocolate factory at Puttur stood at 4,500 tonnes.

Students have a peep into how the weatherman works



Visitors shown maps, charts and wind direction equipment

CWC Director K. Ramachandra Rao explaining the formation of clouds and cyclones as part of open house organised in Visakhapatnam on Monday.— Photo: C.V. SUBRAHMANYAM

VISAKHAPATNAM, March 25, 2014 - The Cyclone Warning Centre, Visakhapatnam, that has done yeoman's service in alerting people along long coastline on the threat from nature's fury, was thrown open to students and members of the public on Monday.

The visitors were taken around the office and shown the maps and charts, radars and wind direction equipment used in weather forecasting and tracking cyclones as part of the celebrations of the World Meteorological Day.

The Day is celebrated on March 23 to commemorate convention of 1950 that created the World Meteorological Organisation (WMO). The day also highlights the huge contribution that National Meteorological and Hydrological Services make to the safety and well-being of society.

This year's World Meteorological Day theme is "Weather and climate: engaging youth." Today's youth will benefit from the dramatic advances being made in our ability to understand and forecast the earth's weather and climate. At the same time, most of them will live into the second half of this century and experience the increasing impacts of global warming.

CWC Director K. Ramachandra Rao said that the presence of a large number of youngsters in the population had made it all the more important for them to know and understand climate change and weather phenomenon.



Weather

Chennai - INDIA

Today's Weather



Partly Cloudy

Tuesday, Mar 25

Max 31° | Min 25°

Rain: 0

Humidity: 70

Wind: normal

Sunrise: 06:10

Sunset: 06:20

Barometer: 1013

Tomorrow's Forecast



Partly Cloudy

Wednesday, Mar 26

Max 35° | Min 24°

Extended Forecast for a week

Thursday

Mar 27



35° | 24°

Partly Cloudy

Friday

Mar 28



29° | 22°

Overcast

Saturday

Mar 29



30° | 23°

Overcast

Sunday

Mar 30



30° | 23°

Overcast

Monday

Mar 31



31° | 23°

Sunny

THE TIMES OF INDIA

Erode farmers promote use of biogas

COIMBATORE: A farmers' organisation in Erode held a demonstration using a tractor and a motor cycle powered by biogas at a city college. Around 200 farmers attended the demonstration and some even tried their hand in operating the exhibits on Sunday. The purpose of the demo is to encourage the use of biogas, one participant said.

A tractor and a two-wheeler powered through methane were exhibited at the college grounds. Their tanks were removed and modified for the purpose. Methane gas used was extracted from vegetable and animal wastes. To pump the gas requires expensive equipment costing Rs20lakh. As this was not available an extra can was fixed with the gas for the purpose of demonstration.

C Nallasamy, secretary of the Federation of Tamil Nadu Farmers Association said that they had come up with this demonstration so that the public could know that there is an alternative to petroleum. "Methane gas as well as ethanol can be used to substitute petroleum. This will decrease air pollution," he said. This is also beneficial to farmers as they can get better prices for their agricultural produce, he added.

Dr P Ayyappan, a retired pharmacologist with the Tamil Nadu Veterinary and Animal Sciences University (TANUVAS), who designed the vehicles said that they had used 100 percent methane for the two-wheeler and 80% for the tractor.

THE HINDU Business Line

Mixed trend in rubber



Kottayam, March 24:

Physical rubber prices showed a mixed trend on Monday.

Though the sentiments continued to remain almost neutral, the most active counter RSS 4 improved marginally following a partial recovery in domestic futures on early trades. The overall volumes were low.

Sheet rubber was quoted firm at Rs. 148 (Rs. 147) a kg, by traders.

The grade improved to Rs. 147.50 (Rs. 147) and Rs. 144.50 (Rs. 144) respectively, according to the Rubber Board and dealers.

April futures firmed up to Rs. 146.59 (Rs. 145.04) May to Rs. 149.90 (Rs. 148.22), June to Rs. 152.30 (Rs. 150.73) and July to Rs. 153.25 (Rs. 150.99) while the August and September futures remained inactive on the National Multi Commodity Exchange.

RSS 3 (spot) dropped to Rs. 139.77 (Rs. 140.20) at Bangkok. March futures closed at ¥244 (Rs. 144.85) on the Tokyo Commodity Exchange

Spot rubber rates Rs. /kg: RSS-4: 148 (147); RSS-5: 145 (144); Ungraded: 140 (140) ISNR 20: 142 (142.50) and Latex 60%: 111 (111).

Global black tea output up

Coonoor, March 24:

Despite a low opening in India, 2014 has started on an encouraging note for global black tea production.

"According to our compilation, global black tea production rose to 56.76 million kg (mkg) in January from 52.43 mkg in January 2013," Rajesh Gupta, publisher of annual Global Tea Digest, told *Business Line* .

This increase of 4.33 mkg marks a growth of 8.26 per cent. Malawi posted the highest increase of 3.71 mkg to reach 8.21 mkg.

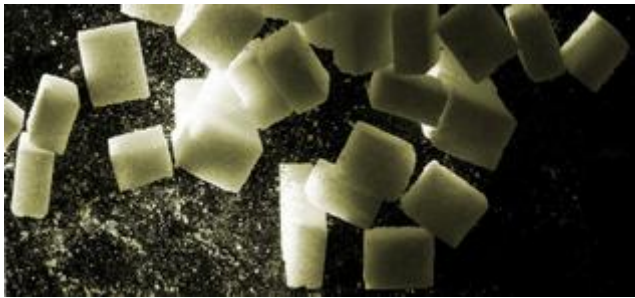
Sri Lanka's production increased by 2.21 mkg to touch 25.42 mkg.

India, on the other hand, suffered a setback of 1.29 mkg to dip to 20.63 mkg. North India fared well, producing 1.04 mkg more to reach 3.84 mkg, but South India's production dropped by 2.33 mkg to dip to 16.79 mkg. Bangladesh marginally lost 0.30 mkg to produce 2.50 mkg.

Collectively, the global market faces a glut and prices are refusing to rise in the absence of matching demand.

This week, more Kenyan teas could be sold at Mombasa auction only by dropping prices up to 25 cents a kg. At Limbe auction, as much as 56 per cent of Malawi tea remained unsold. At Jakarta auctions, 15 per cent of Indonesian tea could not be sold despite dropping prices. Substantial volume of Bangladesh tea was withdrawn at Chittagong auction.

Sugar export subsidies 'will not cross \$ 80 million'



New Delhi, March 24:

India's export subsidies on sugar announced last month will not exceed \$80 million and is essentially designed to encourage diversification away from white sugar to raw sugar, the country has clarified to the World Trade Organisation.

This would translate into roughly 1.4 million tonne of subsidised sugar exports going by the current exchange rate and the subsidy amount of Rs. 3,333 a tonne. Defending its action at a recent meeting of the WTO Committee on Agriculture (CoA) where several members including Brazil and Australia attacked the sops, India said the subsidies were aimed at discouraging white sugar production of which there was a glut in the global market, a WTO official told *Business Line*.

While the WTO does not allow any new export subsidies, some allowance is made for marketing and transportation. There are disciplines in place for members to gradually eliminate existing subsidies.

Drawing flak

Coming down heavily on India at the CoA meeting last Friday, Australia said the Rs. 3,333/tonne incentive payment is equivalent of 14-16 per cent of the world price and threatens to seriously destroy trade as India is the third largest exporter of sugar. It demanded that India immediately discontinue the subsidies.

World's top sugar producer Brazil asked how India could justify the subsidies since there has been no consensus to extend special provisions for developing countries.

Other members that questioned the subsidies include Colombia, the EU, Paraguay, Thailand, El Salvador, Canada, the US, Pakistan and New Zealand.

The subsidy amount of Rs. 3,333 of raw sugar export announced by the Cabinet last month is for exports made in February and March. Fresh calculations will be made for April based on existing exchange rate.

Rising inventories

Meanwhile, India's white sugar stock is on the rise.

At the beginning of the current sugar year (October-September 2013-14), stocks were at 8.8 million tonnes (mt).

Sugar output in the on-going year is expected to be 23.8 mt, according to industry estimates, against a domestic demand of 22 mt.

India said that it would notify the subsidies to the WTO soon.

Limited offtake holds cotton prices on leash



Rajkot, March 24:

Cotton prices remained unchanged as demand remained limited from domestic mills and exporters.

According to traders, demand for best quality cotton was seen in the market. Under present condition, the market may stabilise in coming days.

Sankar-6 cotton for best quality was traded at Rs. 41,800-42,500 for a candy of 356 kg while lower grade cotton was at Rs. 39,000-500.

About 50,000 bales (of 170 kg each) of cotton arrived in Gujarat and 1.60 lakh bales arrived in India. Similarly, raw cotton or *kapas* was traded flat as ginners' buying was need-based.

Kapas lower quality was traded at Rs.

850-950 for a maund of 20 kg, average *kapas* stood at Rs. 950-1,025 and best *kapas* was quoted Rs. 1,030-1,050. Gin delivery *kapas* was traded at Rs. 1,060-1,075.

Traders said that export demand was limited and domestic buying was also seen sluggish.

Arrivals of the fibre have decreased and quality cotton arrival is too slow but prices may not increase from current level as there is no expectation of any fresh demand.

According to traders, India has exported 74 lakh bales during the August-February marketing year. But the pace of shipments is expected to taper in coming months depending upon demand from China.

Cardamom gains aroma on dwindling inflow, higher demand



Kochi, March 24: Good demand amid moderate arrivals has pushed up the cardamom prices last week at auctions. The individual auction average last week ruled above Rs. 700 a kg except for the last Monday auction where it was at Rs. 667.60 due to the usual inferior quality of the material.

The auction average on Sunday touched the level of Rs. 767, the highest in Kerala Cardamom Processing and Marketing Co-operative's auctions during the past one year, PC Punnoose, General Manager, KCPMC, told *Business Line*. Exporters were actively covering till Wednesday but after that they have slowed down

following the rise in the prices, market sources in Bodinayakannur said.

An estimated 80 tonnes are said to have been bought by exporters. Upcountry buyers were also buying but not aggressively ever since the prices have started moving up, they said. The individual auction average price, which had slipped to below Rs. 700 most of the days, last fortnight surged to Rs. 760 a kg. Supply of cardamom from the estates/farms has come to an end and whatever material arrives at present is from the stocks held by the farmers/ primary market dealers, sources claimed. Therefore, as the lean season has begun the market has started feeling a bullish sentiment, they said. The trade in Kumily is of the view that the prices might stabilise at the current levels as it is claimed to be remunerative. Prices of exportable variety has gone up to above Rs. 800 a kg and that in turn has led to a slow down in export buying, they said. 8mm bold capsules were being traded at Rs. 850-900 a kg while bold good colour bulk cardamom was being sold at Rs. 700-730 a kg, they said. During the current season of the crop, which has begun officially from August 1, 2013 to March 23, arrivals stood at 17,098 tonnes against 9,916 tonnes the same day last season. The sales were at 16,640 tonnes and 9,418 tonnes respectively. The weighted average price as on March 23 stood at Rs. 610.60 (Rs. 754.44). At the Sunday auction, the arrivals increased to 96.7 tonnes from 77 tonnes and the entire quantity was sold. The maximum price was at Rs. 1,100 and the minimum at Rs. 489 a kg. The auction average moved up to Rs. 766.67 from Rs. 700.40 a kg the previous Sunday. Prices of graded varieties (Rs. /kg): AGEB 900-910; AGB 740-750; AGS 710-720 and AGS -1: 680-690.

Spices Board staff set up organic farm



Kochi, March 24:

As an inspiration to Government employees in the State, Spices Board India has set up an organic farm at its head office here.

The initiative, assisted by the Kerala State Horticulture Mission, aims at promotion of organic farming.

The function held at Spices Board Head office was inaugurated by Spices Board Chairman A Jayathilak by planting vegetable seeds in grow-bags.

“Excess use of pesticides in vegetables is considered to be the key reason for increased number of cancer patients in Kerala. We can curb this by encouraging the production and consumption of organic vegetables,” he said.

Spices Board employees managed to set up 350 grow-bags on the roof top of Spices Board canteen. Out of this, 250 bags were provided by State Horticulture Mission.

The slurry from the bio-gas plant of the Board’s canteen is used as fertiliser for the plants. Various vegetables such as spinach, ladies finger, green chilli and brinjal are being grown in the farm.

Under the guidance of KC Ponnappan, Technical Assistant of Engineering Department, a team comprising Santo, Eldose T Joseph, Rojth, Manikandan, Unni, Shashi and Sunny took efforts to make the farm a reality.

The second phase of organic farming, which is expected to commence in June, envisages planting of spices trees in the office premises of Spices Board head office.

The Board also intends to distribute grow-bags to the employees with the help of Horticulture Mission.

Business Standard

Sugar up 0.3% on spot demand

[Sugar](#) prices rose by 0.33% to Rs 3,039 per quintal in futures trade today as speculators created fresh positions on pick-up in demand for the summer season.

Lower output in key manufacturing areas also supported the uptrend to some extent.

The country's sugar production declined by 8.5% to 19.38 million tonnes till March 15 of the current marketing year due to lower output in key producing states, according to industry body ISMA.

At the [National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange](#), sugar for delivery in April rose by Rs 10, or 0.33%, to Rs 3,039 per quintal with an open interest of 36,540 lots.

Similarly, the sweetener for delivery in March gained Rs 7, or 0.23%, to Rs 3,107 per quintal in 47,020 lots.

Analysts attributed the rise in sugar prices at futures trade to fresh positions created by speculators on pick-up in demand for the summer season amid estimates of lower output.

Chana down 0.3% on sluggish demand

[Chana prices](#) moved down by 0.33% to Rs 3,301 per quintal in futures trade today as speculators reduced positions due to sluggish demand in the spot market.

At the [National Commodity and Derivative Exchange](#), chana for delivery in May declined by Rs 11, or 0.33% to Rs 3301 per quintal with an open interest of 50,550 lots.

Similarly, the commodity for delivery in April shed Rs 8, or 0.25% to Rs 3245 per quintal in 69050 lots.

Analysts attributed the decline in chana prices at futures to sluggish demand in the spot market against adequate stocks position.

Palm oil up 0.4% as demand picks up

[Crude palm oil](#) prices rose by 0.44% to Rs 591.20 per 10 kg in futures trade as speculators indulged in creating fresh positions following a pick up in demand in the spot market.

At the [Multi Commodity Exchange](#), crude palm oil for delivery in March rose by Rs 2.60, or 0.44%, to Rs 591.20 per 10 kg in business turnover of 27 lots.

Similarly, the oil for delivery in April traded higher by the same margin to Rs 592.90 per 10 kg in 85 lots.

Analysts said speculators created fresh positions after demand in the spot market picked-up and that helped crude palm oil prices to trade higher at futures trade.

Refined soya oil up 0.4% on pick-up in demand

Supported by rising spot demand against lower arrivals from producing regions, [refined soya oil](#) prices rose by 0.44% to Rs 705.85 per 10 kg in futures trading today as speculators created fresh positions.

At the [National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange](#), refined soya oil for delivery in May rose by Rs 3.10, or 0.44%, to Rs 705.85 per 10 kg with an open interest of 1,13,220 lots.

Likewise, the oil for delivery in April edged up by Rs 2.40, or 0.34%, to Rs 714 per 10 kg in 84,620 lots.

Analysts attributed the rise in refined soya oil futures to pick-up in demand in the spot market.

Cardamom up 1.2% on spot demand

[Cardamom](#) prices rose 1.23% to Rs 896 per kg in futures trade today as speculators created fresh positions, driven by pick-up in demand in the spot market.

At the [Multi Commodity Exchange](#), cardamom for delivery in May rose by Rs 10.90, or 1.123%, to Rs 896 per kg in business turnover of 204 lots.

Likewise, the spice for delivery in April gained Rs 10.10, or 1.17%, to Rs 874.80 per kg in 585 lots.

Analysts said fresh positions built-up by speculators on the back of pick up in demand in the spot market against restricted arrivals from growing regions, mainly led to rise in cardamom prices at futures trade.

Potato down 0.4% on increased supply

[Potato](#) prices declined by 0.49% to Rs 1,200 per quintal in futures market today as speculators offloaded their positions amid increased supplies from producing regions.

At the [Multi Commodity Exchange](#), potato for delivery in March traded lower by Rs 5.90, or 0.49%, to Rs 1,200 per quintal in a business turnover of 19 lots.

Market analysts said fall in potato prices at futures trade was mostly due to offloading of positions by speculators, triggered by increased supplies from producing regions against subdued demand in the spot market.
